

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 H-01 DHA-02 ORM-02 EB-07  
AID-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /049 W  
-----052329 141911Z /47  
R 141355Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4566

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3368

DEPT FOR IO

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF LE UNRWA  
SUBJ: VISIT TO BISARIYAH

REF: (A) STATE 140458, (B) BEIRUT 3344

1. ON JULY 12 UNRWA COMMISSIONER GENERAL MCELHINEY, VISITING IO OFFICE DIRECTOR CHESTER NORRIS, AND EMBOFF VISITED BISARIYAH, PROPOSED SITE FOR PALESTINIAN REFUGEES NOW IN DAMOUR. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY MAHMOUD FARES, A PALESTINIAN EMPLOYEE OF UNRWA. BASED ON COMMENTS OF FARES AND DIRECT OBSERVATION, VISITORS LEARNED FOLLOWING:

--SOME FORTY RUDIMENTARY CEMENT BLOCK STRUCTURES, HOUSING APPROXIMATELY 50 FAMILIES, HAVE ALREADY BEEN BUILT ON BISARIYAH SITE. THERE WERE ONLY ABOUT TWENTY SUCH STRUCTURES THERE MONTHS AGO. FAMILIES IN STRUCTURES ARE SHIA, ORIGINALLY FROM BISARIYAH VILLAGE. THEY HAD FLED TO BEIRUT AND THEN RETURNED TO BISARIYAH VILLAGE, BUT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OCCUPY THEIR ORIGINAL HOMES.

--FAMILIES WERE APPARENTLY DELIBERATELY SEEKING GOVERNMENT COMPENSATION. THERE WAS OTHER LAND AVAIL-  
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ABLE FOR BUILDING, BUT THEY HAD CHOSEN BISARIYAH SITE BECAUSE THEY KNEW GOL WAS CONSIDERING IT FOR REFUGEE CAMP. LOCAL GOL OFFICIALS CLAIMED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN EVICTING THESE FAMILIES.

--RESIDENTS OF BISARIYAH HAD DEMONSTRATED IN VILLAGE AGAINST BUILDING CAMP IN AREA. CONTRARY TO RUMORS,

HOWEVER, THEY HAD NOT TRIED TO PREVENT GOL AND UNRWA REPRESENTATIVES FROM ENTERING THE SITE.

2. ACCORDING TO MCELHINEY, PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD AGREED THAT MORNING THAT UNRWA SHOULD USE LL 10 MILLION FROM GOL NOT JUST TO BUILD SHELTERS, BUT ALSO TO PUT IN NEEDED SCHOOLS AND CLINICS (SEE REF B). THIS WOULD REDUCE TOTAL NUMBER OF SHELTERS THAT COULD BE BUILT IN FIRST TRANCHE, BUT GOL AND UNRWA WOULD NEVERTHELESS ATTEMPT TO RAISE ADDITIONAL MONEY FOR FURTHER CONSTRUCTION.

3. DURING TRIP VISITORS OBSERVED THAT ZAHRANI REFINERY WAS STILL FUNCTIONING, SYRIAN ARMY SOLDIERS WERE GUARDING GATE AT ZAHRANI REFINERY AND MAINTAINING CHECKPOINT ON MAIN ROAD LEADING SOUTH BEFORE REFINERY. ACCORDING TO FARES, THIS WAS MOST SOUTHERN SYRIAN ARMY POSITION, BUT SAIQA HAD CHECKPOINT AT ABUL ASSWAD BRIDGE, TEN KILOMETERS NORTH OF TYRE.  
PARKER

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**TAGS:** SREF, LE, UNRWA  
**To:** STATE  
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